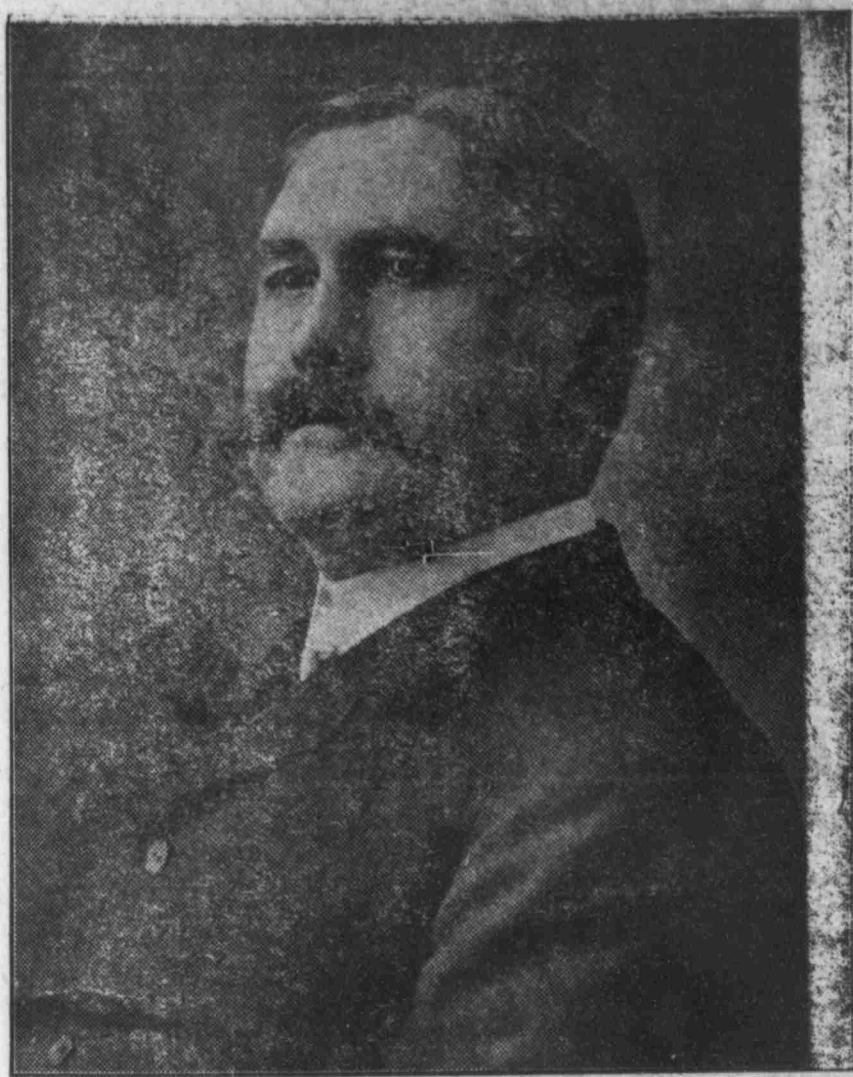


Braxton Beacham For Congress.



Formal Announcement and Platform. A Forceful
Presentation. Looks Like a Winner.

INTRODUCTION.

In announcing for Congressman at large for the great State of Florida, I desire, first of all, to express my sincere gratitude for kindly expressions on the part of my friends of their belief in my fitness for the place, which have appeared, from time to time, in the public prints. While I am deeply conscious that I do not merit all that has been said, in behalf of my candidacy, I am, however, quite sure, that no one could be more thankful for what they have written, in my interest, than I.

It is my determined purpose, in making this race for Congress, to deal in entire candor with myself and with the public. I do not wish to pose as one whose importance is such, that the idea of seeking office, of this character, had to come to him, wholly through the suggestions of friends. This, in my judgement, would be an abuse of the generosity that has been shown me. On the other hand, I can truthfully say; that the initiative having been taken, by those who thought that I was qualified for this high position, has made it much easier for me to make this public announcement of my purpose, and has greatly strengthened my faith in my ability to serve my State in Congress.

I am at that time of life, when the physical man is, as I believe, at the best for good service. My mental endowments and attainments, whatever may be their limitation, when compared with those of others, I am persuaded, have been developed to such an extent, that caution, soberness, and earnestness, will control in the forming of judgements for directing conduct. By frugality and diligence, I am possessed of sufficient means to allow me to give myself to the demands of public affairs, without fret concerning my private interest, and so as to in no way to detract from the duties that I shall owe to my state and constituency, should I be entrusted with the duties of Congressman at large from the great State of Florida. I will say in all frankness, that I much desire the office, in the meager ordinarily conveyed, when it is said that men aspire for place. Being a plain man, from the people, I am ambitious to reflect credit upon myself and the people I may represent. But above these motives, which spring naturally in the human heart, I am come to the season in life when I desire, more than all else, to be of service to my country in a larger way than has yet been my privilege and if I shall be elected to the Congress of the United States, I pledge to bring to the high office my best powers and energies of body and mind and heart. I pledge to put my entire self to the task of making my life count for the good of my State and of my countrymen.

PLATFORM.

In the political evolution of our government, nothing strikes the student of history with greater force than the recurrence of great issues. The size, variety of interest, and general inequality of the different sections has, in general, been the cause of, first: one issue being to the fore, then, another. Great measures have been relegated to the background not because they were unworthy of serious consideration, but rather because our country has as yet, developed sectionally. The majority control, a cardinal tenet of our government, and rightly so, has nevertheless worked a hardship on the more sparsely settled and less favored sections of the United States; consequently parts of the country are richer in the holdings of money, culture and institutions, than are other parts, equally as worthy of such institutions and money holdings, and as susceptible of such development, but they are in the background because those measures necessary for such improvement, as yet, have not been pressed, or else they have for the time given way to other measures more easily understood as belonging to the function of the national government.

For instance: it is understood that until the war of 1812 the main purpose of our tariff had been revenue, with

protection only as an incident. During the war manufacturing became developed partly through our own embargo, partly through the armed hostility. Manufacturing had grown to be an extensive interest, comparing in importance with agricultural and commerce. Therefore, in the new tariff of 1816 the relation was reversed, protection being made the main aim and revenue the incident. Here we have a most interesting illustration of how a measure was brought to the front for the benefit of a section and for the enrichment of a class. A measure against which the democratic party has always contended in the advocacy of a tariff only. Which policy is equitable for the whole country. A policy, however, that has been kept in the background, until now the Democratic party has grown strong enough in this country to enforce this type of legislation, that many of our most enlightened citizens, belonging to other political parties, including Mr. Webster himself, has contended was the only just and equitable tariff measure for the entire Union.

As I have indicated, such inequalities in governmental affairs have been due, not alone to sectional greed, but because of the vastness of our country and the variety of its interests. Consequently, sometimes, as in the tariff theories, long in service have had to be abandoned. The evolution of the government has been towards a better understanding of the needs of the Union. The perfection of the Union of the several States can only come through a perfect understanding of the many

parts and an equal care for the needs of the varied sections.

Constructive Powers of Congress.

It has always been admitted that Congress may lay taxes to build and improve light houses, public docks, and all such properties, whereof the United States is to hold the title. The general improvement of harbors, on the other hand, the Constitution meant to leave to the States all wing each to cover the expense by levying tonnage duties. The practice for years corresponded with this. The inland commonwealths, however, as they were admitted, justly regarded this unfair, unless offset by Government's aid to them in the construction of roads, canals, and riverways.

It may be mentioned, also, that the war of 1812 revealed the need of better means for direct communication with the remote sections of the Union. Transportation to Detroit had cost fifty cents per pound of ammunition, sixty dollars per barrel of flour. All admitted that improved internal routes were necessary. The question was whether the general government had a right to construct them without amendment to the Constitution. The Whigs, like the old Federalists, affirmed such right appealing to Congress' power to establish post roads, wage war, supervise inter-state trade, and conserve the common defense and general welfare. As a rule the Democrats, have always denied such right. Some of them justified outlay upon national rivers and commercial harbors under the Congressional power of raising revenue and regulating commerce. Others conceded the rightfulness of subsidies to States even for bettering inland routes. Treasury surplus at times, and the money appropriations which by common consent, had been made under Monroe and later for the old National Road, encouraged the Whig contention, but the whole question was taken out of politics by the rise of the railroad system after 1832. The National Road had, however, been built across Ohio and Indiana on its way to St. Louis, and was made over in 1830 to the States through which it passed.

This, in brief, is the history of a measure of the greatest import to the Nation, which at one time was to the fore, and has been left in the background only because, in the rapid development of National resources, other measures have seemed the more important. It must be understood that this is not a measure that any party, not even for party success, has declared without the pale of the Constitution and as not belonging within the function of the National Government.

Natural Means of Transportation RIVERS.

My contention is, that the growth of the country and the consequent new needs of our day, demand the giving of this great measure its proper perspective. It cannot be successfully denied, that the future happiness, contentment, and prosperity, of the American people depends more on good roads than on any other type of construction for intercommunication. I do not believe, at this time, with the already constructed railroads, that any additional number of railroads would mean so much to any large section of this country, as a system of thoroughly modern highways would mean to the people, and, and no other endeavor could be freighted with greater possibilities for increasing the wealth of the country people. Rome made an Empire, not so much by the Roman sword, as by the net work of her Roman roads.

If one will take any single county, in the great State of Florida, in the less favored sections of the State, and will make a calculation in the saving of teams and vehicles, the increase in the tonnage in hauling, the increase in the number of trips per day, the greater contentment on the part of the rural population, the culture, from ease of communication with centers where women and children can observe the habits and customs of more advanced civilization, I am persuaded that such a one will conclude that the greatest need of our great State, at this time, is more extended and better highways. I am persuaded, that the bringing of this great issue, as a factor in the building of the Nation, before the Congress of the United States will be the playing of a part in the political development of our government, as important and as beneficial as any played by our great fathers in the more formative period of the Nation and of the Constitution. I, therefore, come before the people of this great Commonwealth, asking for their suffrage for congressman at large, pledging myself to the advocacy of this great measure of National aid in the building of highways in the several States.

I realize the ease, which the part new needs have played and may play, in directing our governmental conduct, may be lost sight of, and understanding as I do, that a measure is not feasible simply because they hear disinterested or indifferent public men speak lightly of such measures, I am therefore, at the greater pains to show what a large part new need have played in shaping our policies. Perhaps there is no tenet to our government now clearly showing its evolution, thru new necessities in the voicing of new conditions, than the Monroe Doctrine.

Rights Guaranteed Under the Constitution.

I have merely alluded to this doctrine in order to give force to the claim that there must be yet fuller interpretation to the function of the National government, in developing the natural resources of this country, if we are to possess the goodly inheritance that may be ours, by a wise and conservative application of the rights guaranteed under the Constitution, when those rights are interpreted in the light of the new National needs. No man can foretell the influence of America on the civilization of the world, but many are feeling that much of that

influence will depend upon how its statesmen of today give share to the purposes of this government in aiding in the development of American resources. The government has already come to recognize that the development and improvement of waterways in the United States is a function of the National government, and that the contentment, prosperity and wealth of the nation is dependent, to a degree, thereupon. This conception, which all now recognize as just and right is an evolution, through slow process of the public mind.

A Visible Illustration.

ST. JOHNS RIVER.

We have in the State of Florida a river, worth more for the making of wealth, the reclaiming of lands, the building of home and schools, and the bringing of a healthy and thrifty citizenship to the State, than is in the power of many men, at the present time to conceive. To many of the citizens of Florida the St. Johns river means no more than it meant to the wild Creek or Seminole Indian, a pleasant stream to meander along the banks of, and a goodly place for pastime with the rod and gun. The United States government itself, has as yet never had brought before its Congress the enormous potential value of this stream to this State and to the Nation. The paltry sums of money which have been expended by the government in improving navigation is the best argument for showing that neither your representatives in Congress, nor others, have succeeded in bringing to public attention, this natural source from which in the future, shall come untold wealth to the people of this State. If one will make a study of the topography of the country through which the St. Johns river flows; consider the direction which the river tends, and recall, that from its source to beyond Jacksonville, when it gives itself to the great ocean, there is only a fall of an insufficient number of feet; there is not, what may be called a rapid in the entire length, he will be startled at the contemplation of the ease and comparatively little cost with which this river can be turned into a great OCEANIC CANAL, with ocean steamers coming to their piers and taking on their cargoes at Sanford, and such an observer, will also see that the present development of the State is only in its infancy. Under this procedure new possibilities will come to the old man, ready to turn over the affairs of life to the son, and larger hopes will spring in the breast of every younger son of toil.

We, as yet, are new in this State to large expenditures, but happily that Nation has come to understand that large expenditure, resulting in permanent good is better than small expenditure, resulting in nothing that is lasting. In my judgement, if the merits of the St. Johns river is a stream for the travel of ocean steamers inland, were put before Congress, with the force that the cause demands, a million or two millions of dollars could be secured for such a purpose, as easily and more so, than one hundred thousand dollars could be secured for the improvement of some particular part of this river, resulting in no lasting good and bringing no apparent prosperity to any large section of the State.

If the St. Johns river was opened for ocean vessels to Sanford, the canal, under the sluggish flow of the stream would remain open for generations. The nature of the stream and the country through which it flows are such that no amount of rainfall would ever endanger its canal by filling it with the wash from floods as is the case in most of the streams of America.

The most impressive stream in the British Isles, is the Clyde in Scotland, but it is not known to the average traveler that this great ship-bearing river, of the greatest vessels that ply the ocean, is entirely a man-made stream for such craft. Time was when only the small craft of the wild man of the North of Europe plied these waters, now the ships of all seas empty their bottoms at Glasgow and from the great ship yards that line the banks of this great canal-river, some of the finest ships afloat have been sent down her channel to do service on all the oceans of the world, and some of the most beautiful homes of men are on the banks of this stream, made beautiful because made serviceable, by the skill and energy, and daring of man.

What Can Be Done.

Under modern engineering the St. Johns river may be made a great ship carrying canal, with such ease as to make the opening of the Clyde in Scotland appear a Herculean task in comparison. The fact is that under the system of suction the mud from the channel could be banked on either side, without interfering with the flow of water or lessening its volume and which in no way, would do damage to property immediately adjacent to the river nor to surrounding country.

There would be no expensive blasting or cuts from Sanford to the ocean. Not a single dam or lock would have to be built but only a channel would have to be opened, under the cheapest construction known to the science of engineering, and Florida would have the best and the cheapest ship-canal in the world. It can be safely affirmed that the St. Johns river can be made navigable for ocean craft at less expense than any other stream in the United States, and that the benefits therefrom will be as great, for the country at large, and this State in particular as any work the government has done, of a similar nature, for any section of the United States.

In addition to the large area of country along the travel of the St. Johns river

there is another large section of Florida, bound to this river in sending its waters to the ocean, known as Lake county, with some 1500 lakes of varying sizes, but in the aggregate making a volume of water that gives pause, when one contemplates the possibilities in these same waters if properly utilized for enriching the country. The Oklawaha river is the outlet of these lakes to the St. Johns river. This stream is of such importance that the government has already expended considerable sums of money from time to time, for improving its navigation. I may say here, however, that what has been done, on both the St. Johns and the Oklawaha rivers, by the government has not made these streams navigable for different craft, nor opened them for navigation in any different season, than was the carrying powers of the streams before the government began its work of improving them, which in my judgement is due to the fact that the work of improving these streams has never been gone at on a sufficiently large scale nor in such manner as their merits and possibilities as waterways for the country demanded. It is not difficult for the average man to understand that \$200,000 may be expended on such an enterprise and result in no appreciable benefit, while a million or two millions of dollars expended on the same enterprise will not only bring a lasting benefit but will in the long run, be far the cheaper to the government. Such a system of improved waterways as I advocate, would bring under the dominion of man a vast area of land, for orange growing and trucking purposes, and give access to the markets of the world by a cheap mode of transportation, that are now as wild as when the red men roamed the forest.

The practicability of utilizing these lake waters is now abundantly shown in the fact that the Oklawaha river is already navigable for inferior craft, and which can be made into a stream that will carry large enough craft into the St. Johns river, bearing the products of the country, for the loading of ocean going vessels. Not only so, but such a development would mean the dotting of the lips of these great lakes with beautiful homes and a country subdued to man's will, paying tribute from the soil to the genius and labor of man, in rich reward.

The Same Reasoning Applies to Roads.

What I have said about cheapness in improving waterways applies equally to highways. If one will stop to think that in all the affairs of life, the cheapest things are the durable things, he will be convinced that the first cost of a road should be sufficient to conglomerate an abundance of good road material and that it should be used with generosity sufficient to insure permanent results.

A system of great roads from Pensacola to Jacksonville, from Jacksonville to Miami and to Tampa, or any other section of the State, can be built by simply grading and throwing up the bed from the soil along the several routes, and brick laid upon such a foundation would make roads which would stand for an hundred years, and would be of sufficient strength to carry the traffic of the country. The foundation of these roads would never be in danger of destruction from frost, nor would the cold ever cause the soil to form a "muck" so that the brick would be submerged in mud. Along such a system of roads and off from such highways, thousands of those seeking for place and opportunity for making a living, under God's law of making their bread in the sweat of their faces, would build their humble dwellings. This latter class is now recognized of more value to the South, in her present agricultural and manufacturing development, than an innumerable host of rich men would be, who are under no necessity of laboring in order to live, and thus contribute of their bare labor for the subduing of the land to man's will. The crying need of the New South is not more money, but more poor, honest, upright, manly men, under the necessity of laboring in order to live, with opportunity to enjoy fully the rewards of honest toil. In my judgement no one thing will contribute more to this great end than a thoroughly well built system of public roads, knitting communities together and opening an easy way to the markets of the world.

Believes in These Two Great Measures.

It is therefore, upon these two great issues—the building of great highways and the improving of the waterways, which I believe of the chiefest concern in the present internal development of the United States, that I seek office at the hands of the people of this state. I believe the issues should elicit, and will elicit, the best powers of the present and the future statesman in the endeavor to advance the interest of this great country.

I have persuaded myself that these are matters of paramount importance to the prosperity and growth of Florida. I, therefore, come before her people, asking for their suffrage that they may thereby give me the opportunity, in the Congress of the United States, to plead and work for measures so devoutly to be wished.

I have endeavored, in setting forth my views on these issues, not to introduce matters that might in any way obscure them. Consequently I have discussed nothing of a purely party nature, and I wish now to say that I am in entire accord with the policies of the great Democratic party, and if elected to the Congress of the United States, I shall do all in my power to make the policy of the party effective in the National life.

B. BEACHAM.